Winning With a Smile:

THE LIFE STORY OF

Senator Georgia Montgomery Powers

AS TOLD TO: LEROY ANDERSON

Edited by: Michelle L. Washington

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Dedication Page

This book is being dedicated to the fond memories of my family and especially to my 3 brothers who still live in Louisville, Kentucky.

Georgia Montgomery Powers

Senator Powers with brother left of her and the father Ben Montgomery standing behind her.

Left top corner: Rudolph, Right top corner: Carl (deceased when photo was taken)

From left to right: Frances Walker Montgomery (*Mother*), Georgia Lee Montgomery*, Robert, James*, John Albert, Joseph Ben, Lawrence Franklin*, Phillip*, Ben Gore Montgomery (*Father*).

*Living members of Montgomery family

Forward

It's been a rare privilege to have become a friend to someone as special as Senator Georgia Powers. I was honored that the Senator shared her life story with me about certain events that helped shaped her life. The purpose of this book is to share those life events with young children in order to inspire them to seek to reach for their dreams as she did. Always with a bright smile on her face, she would press forward through her challenges to reach her goals to help those who could not help themselves. That was her dream and with a smile she made her dreams come true. Her wish is that young people who read this book will also meet their challenges with a smile, while working towards their dreams as she did.

LeRoy Anderson, Jr.

Editorial Remarks

In the fall of 2012, Leroy Anderson brought Senator Powers to my classroom. On that day of excitement, I felt as though I was living out a childhood dream. Growing up during the civil rights era, with parents who incorporated the actual televised events from that era as "teachable moments", makes Senator Powers more than legendary to me. To me, she is an iconic cornerstone of not only Kentucky History, but also American History. Her status of unmatched trailblazing as; ***the first woman to become a Kentucky Senator, the first African American Senator in Kentucky, as well as her civil rights advocacy,*** has left her in a league where many women of her era did not *dare*, nor even think to go.
Having said all of that, no one should ever question the necessity and importance of sharing such an iconic American Legacy with the children of this world. The status of sacrifice, courage and consistency that Senator Powers shared throughout her 21 years in public service as an American Senator, stand alone as a stellar epilogue of her monumental contributions to our nation.
It is a great honor and even a greater privilege to be able to see this project become a reality.

And with simple but heartfelt words I say, ***"Thank you Senator Georgia Powers" for all that you have given not only to the people of Kentucky but also to the people who you have touched throughout this world. And I also want to thank you for consenting to allow me the honor of recording your story for children."***

My prayer is that God will continue to shower you with his richest blessings throughout your golden years. And may the readers of your book choose to find the courage to ***"win with a smile"*** in the midst of trials, triumph and also in tribulation when standing for the truth.

With heartfelt and humble regards,

Michelle

Figure 1: Senator Powers Visits with Michelle Washington class at EL Minnis Jr. Academy (2014)

Figure 2: Black History Tribute for Senator Powers (February. 2014)

Figure 3: May 2015 Luncheon when Michelle introduced children's book idea to Senator Powers

“YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU DESIRE ONCE YOU SET YOUR MIND TO IT.

BE DETERMINED.

BE SERIOUS.

YOU CAN DO IT.

ONCE YOU HAVE THAT DESIRE, IT’S A GO.”

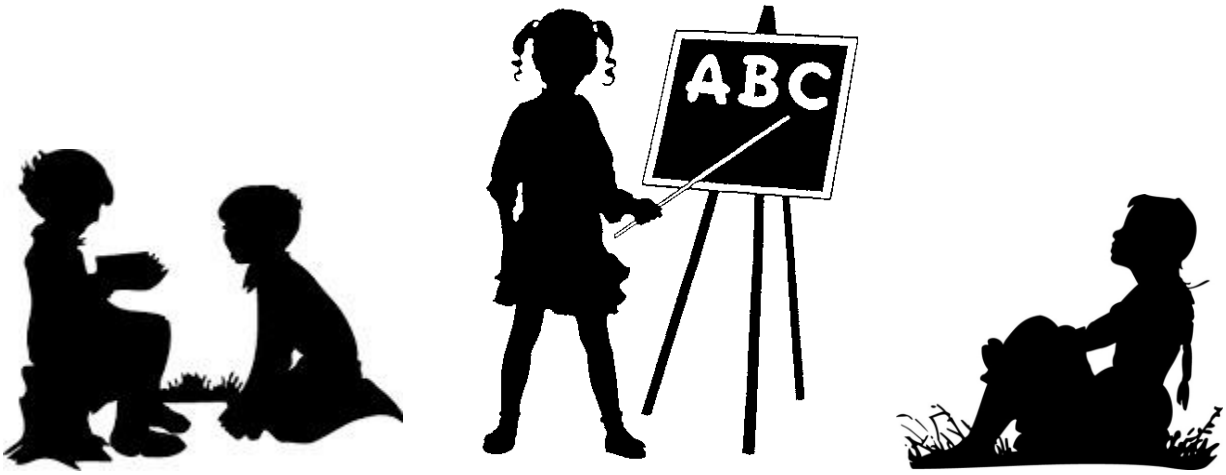
Senator Georgia M. Powers

Keep Smiling Senator Georgia M. Powers 10-25-15

A story

from "The Senator"

for all children.



Georgia was born in Springfield, “Jim town”, Kentucky. She stayed in a home made of wood with just two rooms. There were no electric lights and there was no indoor plumbing for either bathrooms or the sink. Georgia, her Mom and Dad and Joseph, her older brother, were all happy to be together in their little home.

Georgia smiled through it all!

When Georgia was just two years old, a tornado hit the wooden cabin and destroyed it! Little Georgia was covered by an overturned mattress. She survived the storm under the mattress. After the tornado, Georgia and her family moved to Louisville, Kentucky.

Georgia smiled through it all!

When Georgia was 14 years old, the Ohio River flooded the whole city of Louisville and her home in 1937. There was at least 4 feet of water in the house.

Georgia and her family lost everything, but a little dress that Georgia rolled up under her arm and took it with her to higher ground.

Georgia smiled through it all!

When Georgia was 16 years old she graduated from Central High School. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority awarded her with a scholarship so she could attend Louisville Municipal College. (*Now Simmons University*) She had to work to make up what the scholarship didn't cover.

Georgia smiled through it all!

In 1942, the United States went to World War ll. Most of the men went to fight in the war leaving the women to work in the factories. Georgia worked in an airplane factory as a riveter. She used a riveting gun to put rivets into metal plates on the sides of airplanes being built in the factory. With her winning smile and pleasant attitude and hard work she was promoted to inspector for lost airplanes parts!

Georgia smiled through it all!

Georgia returned home to Louisville, Kentucky to become active in political campaigns where she helped men to run for office. She remembered what her parents, Ben and Frances Montgomery, as well as her eight brothers had taught her while growing up.

Figure 4: Picture of Georgia with Governor Stumbo Campaign

Georgia smiled through it all!

Georgia wanted to make a difference in politics by helping to make laws that would help the less fortunate people of Kentucky. In The Kentucky State Senate, she won wide support for her many causes with determination, hard work and a beautiful winning smile.

Georgia smiled through it all!

Two pictures of Senator Powers in the Senate House

Georgia became an advocate for children, women, African Americans and poor people. She became a voice for those who had no voice. While she worked to help others have better lives,

Georgia smiled through it all!

Georgia served in the Kentucky State Senate for 21 years as the Chair of the Health and Welfare Committee and the Labor and Industry Committee. She helped change many laws and made a difference.

Georgia smiled through it all!

1993
Ethel Comm

Senator Georgia Powers retired from office in 1988. She went on to serve as the *Vice President* of the *Louisville Branch*, for the *NAACP*. She is also the author of four books.

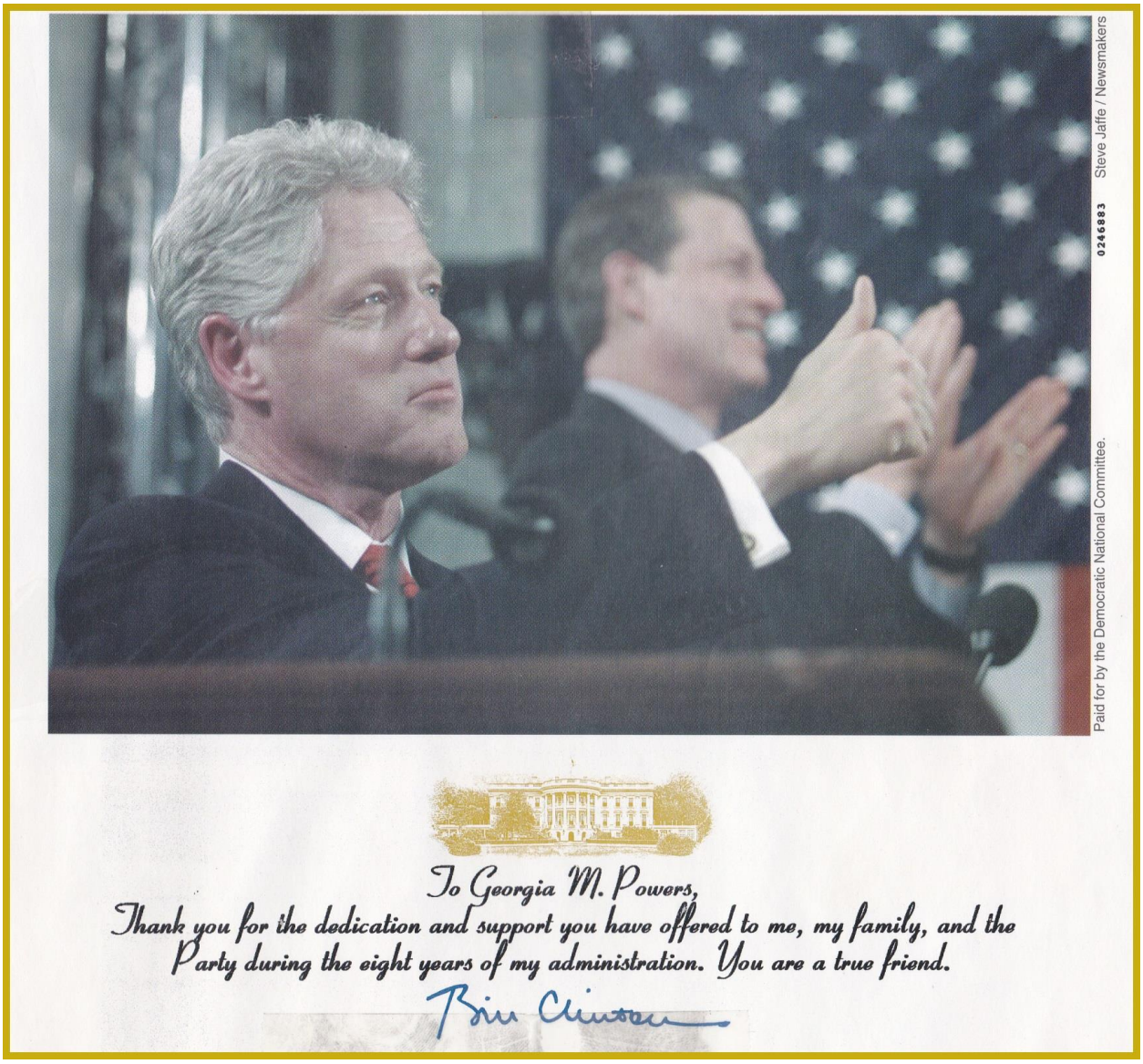
Figure 5 Senator Powers surrounded by 37 male senators in the Kentucky Senate

Throughout her life, while facing many challenges she smiled through it all.

GEORGIA WON WITH A SMILE!

Senator Georgia Powers last day in the Kentucky Senate was December 14, 1988

A Pictorial Appendix of Senator Georgia Montgomery Powers Career



GEORGIA DAVIS POWERS
EXPRESSWAY

Proclamation

by

Steven L. Beshear
Governor

of the

Commonwealth of Kentucky

To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come:

WHEREAS, Senator Georgia Montgomery Davis Powers became the first African-American to be elected to the Kentucky Senate in 1967, where she served honorably for twenty-one years; and

WHEREAS, Senator Powers was an important leader of the civil rights movement in Kentucky, leading the Allied Organization for Civil Rights in advocating a statewide public accommodations and fair employment law in the early 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Senator Powers worked with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1964 to organize a march on Frankfort in support of equality in public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her more than two decades of distinguished service in the Kentucky Senate, Senator Powers continued her avid support of civil rights through her sponsorship of anti-discrimination legislation, as well as her introduction of statewide fair housing legislation; and

WHEREAS, Senator Powers has authored two books and has been profiled in several other books, documentaries and exhibits, including the "Kentucky Women Remembered" exhibit in the West wing of the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, In its 2010 regular session, the Kentucky General Assembly voted to rename a portion of Interstate 264, which runs through the West End of Louisville, the "Georgia Davis Powers Expressway" in honor of Senator Powers' extraordinary accomplishments;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVEN L. BESHEAR, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, do hereby proclaim June 16, 2010, as

SENATOR GEORGIA DAVIS POWERS DAY

in Kentucky.

DONE AT THE CAPITOL, in the City of Frankfort this 15th day of June, in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand Ten and in the 219th year of the Commonwealth.

STEVEN L. BESHEAR
GOVERNOR

Trey Grayson
Secretary of State

Figure 6: Veterans Day Parade November 11, 2014

Joseph Ray 1st African American race car driver in Nascar with wife Emma Ray and Senator Powers January 22, 1980. (They were neighbors and friend from six years old.)

Golf Shore, Alabama 1973

'68

Senator Powers is being honored at a local Louisville Church, July 1968

Book Credits

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